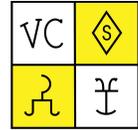


# MATCHLESS



Newsletter of The Orinda Historical Society ~ June 2025



## Anyone We Know?

Do you remember Dorothea Lange's iconic photo, *Migrant Mother*, epitomizing the Great Depression? Or Steve McCurry's *Afghan Girl* on the June 1985 cover of National Geographic magazine? It took decades to locate these individuals after their photos appeared worldwide, so now it's time to find the anonymous children on the Orinda Fire District's truck!

This undated picture was snapped by Les Sipes, a photojournalist with the Oakland Tribune, who flew the Contra Costa traffic route in the 1940s and '50s. You'll find it on the cover of Arcadia Publishing's book *Images of America: Orinda* — available at the OHS Museum — but can you also name these kids? Or the firefighter? Is one of them perhaps you?? We'd love to know who they are. The winner earns a copy of the book... plus our heartfelt thanks.

# Donations & Grants

We are enormously grateful to Roger Rosenthal, former Orinda resident and Miramonte graduate, for taking such good care of Orinda's original Boy Scouts' flag for the past 92 years! This was just one item amongst an entire treasure trove that Roger recently donated to OHS. The town's very first Scout Troop was launched in 1933 with just ten members. Their precious flag is now in the tender loving care of OHS.



## *Smart Giving*

OHS is happy to announce that we can now accept stock donations as well as IRA QCDs.

The Orinda Historical Society is an all-volunteer organization that is entirely funded by the generosity of our community and these days there are many smart ways to give to non-profits like ours, such as using IRA qualified charitable distributions (QCD) or by donating appreciated stocks.

**For more information contact:  
Nancy Royster at  
info@OrindaHistory.org**

## We also thank...

**The Orinda Woman's Club** for their recent grants which have provided us with a new scanner plus updates to our computer and software systems, as well as two handsome double-sided signs to announce when we're open (every Saturday, 11:00am to 1:00pm).

**The Orinda Community Foundation** for two separate \$1000 grants which allowed OHS to present the plaque to Orinda Motors (right) as well as embark on a much needed website refresh.

**And a longtime OHS Member** whose generous stock donation helped fund our digitization and technology projects.



*Designed by local resident Scott Cuyler, this plaque was presented to Orinda Motors by OHS in celebration of the garage's first one hundred years. Read more about it at <https://theorindanews.com/2025/03/26/orinda-motors-celebrating-100-years-of-keeping-cars-on-the-road/>*

# Digitizing our Archives

*Using today's technology to preserve our past!*

It's been a busy year for OHS with a special focus on digitizing our archives. This is a multi-year process, but we've made significant progress and are delighted to report that some of our collection is now available online for the public to enjoy.

In 2022, we received a **very generous grant from California Revealed**, a statewide initiative that helps preserve California's heritage, to digitize ten years of our 24-year collection of *Orinda Sun* newspapers. The project involved scanning over 600 editions of newspapers, so it was not surprising that it took two years for them to complete this task. *Orinda Sun* newspapers from 1948 to 1959 are now available online through the California Revealed website: [californiarevealed.org](http://californiarevealed.org)

These newspapers can also be found on the Internet Archive website: [archive.org](http://archive.org), and are keyword searchable (hint: use advanced search with the Title = "Orinda Sun" and make sure to select the "search text contents" button.)



In 2023, we received a second grant from California Revealed to digitize some of our oral histories and audio/visual files. A lot of these recordings were on archaic media, so it was critical to transfer them to a digital format as old tapes can degrade over time. These audio/visual files can be found on the California Revealed website. Search for "Orinda Historical Society".

Our volunteers (with a big shout out to Vivian Ricci who did the majority of the work) digitized all our accession records for every item donated to OHS since we started in the 1970s. This was no easy task!

OHS recently purchased a subscription to an online museum oriented software application, *Catalogit*, to organize and store information about our archives. We are currently populating this application with our accession and collection data. Some of our archives can already be viewed online, with more coming in the future.

**Go to our website, [orindahistory.org](http://orindahistory.org), and scroll down to click on "View Archives".**

# All The News That's Fit To Print!

According to Collectors Weekly, "almost everyone has an old newspaper or two tucked away somewhere... and most of them are absolutely worthless". But that ignores the fact that riffling through old newspapers can be priceless.

OHS offers a wonderful print collection — from the 1940s to the aughties! You'll find some of our newspapers online, others in the Museum, and yet more in our storage facility. But all are very accessible. Come and talk to us and let us help you find the newspaper you're looking for. Those listed below as "off-site storage" will take additional time to retrieve but we're happy to help.

You'll see us on your right when walking out of the Library parking garage. We're open every Saturday from 11:00 to 1:00 and also by arrangement. For more information about our newspaper collection, please contact the Orinda Historical Society: [info@orindahistory.org](mailto:info@orindahistory.org) or 925.254.1353.

We currently have an active project digitizing specific items and WELCOME ALL VOLUNTEERS!

PUBLICATION	YEARS AVAILABLE *	LOCATION
BOULEVARD NEWS	1943-1947	At Museum
MORINDAN	1957	At Museum
ORINDA HOME BUILDER	1939-1945	At Museum
THE HOME BUILDER	1944-1945	At Museum
ORINDA MORAGA RECORD	1961	At Museum
ORINDA VOICE	1975-1978	At Museum
THE SQUIRE	1969-1973	At Museum
LAFAYETTE SUN	1941, 1944, 1945	At Museum
ORINDA SUN	1948-1959	Available online at <a href="https://archive.org/search">https://archive.org/search</a>
ORINDA SUN	1948-1980	Off-site storage
ORINDA NEWS	2006-2024	Available online at The Orinda Association
ORINDA NEWS	1937-2016	At Museum
LAMORINDA SUN	2007, 2008, 2010-2011	Off-site storage
LAMORINDA WEEKLY	2007-2009, 2010-2015	Off-site storage
LAMORINDA WEEKLY	All issues	Available online: <a href="https://lamorindaweekly.com/html2/archive">https://lamorindaweekly.com/html2/archive</a>
MIDWEEK SUN	1973-1979	Off-site storage
CONTRA COSTA SUN	1986, 2003, 2005-2006	Off-site storage

# OUTREACH & EDUCATION

What better place to qualify for a Community Badge than in a museum that's at the very heart of your community?

We were recently chosen as the perfect spot for Girl Scout Troop 31735 to have fun on a scavenger hunt amongst our fascinating historical artifacts.

The girls raced around the museum, checking off sixteen cryptic clues including....

- "before computers, people used one of these to write important things" ....
- "uh-oh, this deer doesn't have these anymore...."
- "this was fired out of a cannon in the 1700s on Overhill Drive".



*Answers: a vintage typewriter, deer antlers, an 18th century cannonball*

OHS is happy to announce that we're gradually resuming our **Third Grade Downtown Walks** — in addition to those that we conduct (always free of charge) for the more mature groups! At the time of writing, plans are being hatched for Laurie Smith, our Schools Co-ordinator, and Kay Norman, former OHS President and experienced Orinda guide, to take Glorietta's Third Graders on a series of conducted tours through a variety of historical highlights.



*Getting the word out while helping Glorietta Elementary School celebrate their 75th anniversary last November are OHS Board Members (l to r) Nancy, Vivian, Karen and Alison.*

# ORINDA'S ORAL HISTORIES

Thanks to two invaluable grants from California Revealed (see page 3), our oral histories are now available via the OHS website — a mix of 250+ audio and video recordings, 42 of which can be streamed through the link on our website. Simply go to [orindahistory.org](http://orindahistory.org), scroll down, and click on “View Archives”.

There you can experience stories from Orinda resident **Wayne Miller (1918-2013)**, one of the first Western photographers to document Hiroshima’s destruction. Miller freelanced for *Life*, contributed to *The Family of Man* exhibition, and won two consecutive Guggenheim fellowships in 1946-1948. He also authored several photography books — two of which you'll find in our museum.

Forty years ago, when Orinda officially became a city, **Richard Heggie (1923-2012)** was voted in as its first mayor. Here he discusses Orinda’s governance before and after its 1985 incorporation, covering growth management projects like Orinda Woods and Gateway Valley as well as the search for a sister city — ultimately Tabor, Czechia.

**Ben Randall, Jr. (1935-2006).** A great favorite with everyone connected with the Orinda Historical Society, Randall moved here when he was five years old and has many entertaining stories to tell about growing up in Orinda, where his father worked as manager of the Orinda Theatre from the day it opened in December 1941, three weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**Ardith Draegar (1924-2019).** Recorded on a chilly March day in 1997, Draegar tells her interviewer, Ann Jenkins, about her legislative work with Senator Arthur H Breed Sr. in the early to mid-1940s, and reminisces over post-WW2 cocktail parties in the construction industry. She also throws light on the naming of streets, largely on "the crossroads side" of Orinda.

*We're always looking to add to our oral histories so, if you can recommend anyone with an Orinda story to tell, or if you yourself have memories to share with the community, please get in touch and let us record your reminiscences for posterity!*

## MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

We're open **every Saturday from 11:00am to 1:00pm**. Come in and say hello, allow us to answer your questions, show you around, or just let you mooch through our eclectic collections! And if you find you like us, maybe you'd like to join our friendly band of volunteers? We're located directly adjacent to the library parking garage. We're also happy to open the Museum for class reunion visits!

**Tel: 925 254 1353    Email: [info@orindahistory.org](mailto:info@orindahistory.org)    Website: [orindahistory.org](http://orindahistory.org)**

# Orinda Classic Movie Matinee

## OHS Member Exclusive

Step back in time and experience the Golden Age of Cinema with the Orinda Classic Movie Matinee series, hosted by film critic and historian Matías Bombal at the historic Orinda Theatre. Each screening begins with 30 minutes of classic short subjects including a vintage newsreel, an animated cartoon, and previews of upcoming offerings in the series. Immediately before the feature film, Mr. Bombal takes you behind the scenes, sharing fascinating history and insights about the movie you're about to enjoy.

OHS Members can enjoy an exclusive **Two for the Price of One** admission offer—bring a friend and experience timeless films the way they were meant to be seen.

**When:** The last Thursday of the month at 1:00 PM

**Where:** Orinda Theatre

**Admission:** \$10 per person (or two for the price of one for OHS Members)

### Upcoming Movies 2025

June 24 – *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T* (1953)

July 29 – *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950)

August 26 – *Swing Time* (1936)

September 30 – *The African Queen* (1951)

October 28 – *Bell, Book and Candle* (1958)

November 25 – *King Kong* (1933)

December 30 – *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)

## Why Your Support Matters

Your donation to the Orinda Historical Society does more than preserve artifacts—it safeguards our community's unique story for future generations. Without the OHS countless photographs, documents, and oral histories of Orinda would be lost forever. Your contribution, whether large or small, helps maintain our archives, create engaging exhibits, and develop educational programs that connect Orinda's past to our present.

Supporting the Orinda Historical Society is an investment in community identity and shared heritage. In a rapidly changing world, the OHS serves as an anchor that helps us understand where we've been and where we're going. By becoming a donor today, you join a legacy of stewards ensuring that the authentic voices and experiences of our Orinda community continue to be heard, celebrated, and learned from, for years to come.

**The Orinda Historical Society  
P.O. Box 82  
Orinda, CA 94563**

*Yes, I wish to support OHS. Enclosed is my annual membership contribution/donation of:*

- \$30 Individual       \$50 Family       \$20 Senior (65+)  
 \$350 Lifetime Member       \$500 Tres Ranchos Circle       \$..... Gift/Donation

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to remain anonymous. This gift is in memory/honor of \_\_\_\_\_

***Please make checks payable to Orinda Historical Society. OHS is a 501(c) nonprofit public benefit charity.***

***Your donation is tax deductible by law.***

***Established in 1970, OHS is a membership based nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, protect and share the history of Orinda.***